

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

RESEARCH EXTENSION IN MISSIONS (ca. 1930)

"Taking steps along old lines aids in perfecting principles and methods already established, but they never initiate the great steps in human progress. These always come by finding a new method of attack upon the problem." John Dewey.

Perhaps no better indication can be given of the growing interest in missionary research than to list below some of the replies to the communication sent out from this office some few months ago. It will be remembered that those who registered as members were asked to state as definitely as possible some of the problems in which they were either interested or upon which they were actually working. These responses were as follows:

- E. Stanley Jones, Sitapur, U. P. India ---Indian Racial Problems.  
Arthur B. Moss, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, ---Indian Mass Movements.  
Frank T. Meacham, Chikore, Chipinga, South Africa,--The best methods of freeing the native Christian from heathen customs, superstition, and spirit worship. The effect of these upon the African type of Christianity.  
John W. Stanley, 11 City Road, Allahabad, India.---The Development of Modern Indian Social System.  
Albert J. Saunders, American College, Madura, South India.---Conflicts and Changing Attitudes Occasioned by the Missionary in Foreign Lands. Nationalism in India.  
John J. Heeren, Tsinan, Shantung, China.---Missions in China during the Middle Ages and up to 1720.  
Guy Walter Sarvis, University of Nanking, Nanking, China.---The disintegrating factors in the impact between East and West. Types of Radicalism that are influential, and reasons for their influence in China.  
William Charles Macdougall, Jubbulpore, Central Provinces, India.---The Psychology of Idolatry. The Psychological Processes Involved, and the most serviceable technique for integrating a Christian culture in India.  
Charles A. Clark, Pyengyang, Korea.---The religious development of the Korean people; their attitude and method of approach to the Christian religion, or any religion.  
Raymond H. Ewing, Tura, Assam, India.---Program of salvation for second generation Christians' children in Assam.  
Mrs. R. H. Ewing, Tura, Assam, India,---Primitive home life in Assam. Organization of Religious Education for a primitive people.

- Paul R. Hackett, American Baptist Mission, Moulmein, Burma,---  
The changing attitudes of Burman Buddhists towards education. The use of dramatics in Buddhist education.
- Charles W. Shoop, U. B. Mission, Canton, China.---What specific changes are taking place in the folkways, mores, and institutions of the Cantonese, as a result of contact with our western culture, and especially the Christian religion?
- Clarence B. Day, Hangchow Christian College, Zakow, Che. China.---  
The cult of Amitabha. Present status of the cult in Buddhist circles.
- Daniel C. Holtom, 65 Miyashita Cho, Koishikawa Ku, Tokyo, Japan,---  
The folk religion of modern Japan. Problems involved in promoting international friendship.
- David C. Graham, Suifu, Szechuen Province, China,---Primitive religions, especially those of the aboriginal tribes of west China.
- Dryden L. Phelps, Chengtu, Szechuen Province, China,---The basis in Chinese thought for the presentation of Christianity.
- William B. Charles, Cadiz, Neg. Occ. Philippines,---The development of independent Catholic Churches in the Philippines.
- John McGuire, Insein, Burma,---Studies in modern types of Burman Buddhism.
- Arthur W. Hummel, American Board Mission, Shansi, China.---Chinese culture and its relation to mission work in China.
- Miss Josepha Franklin, Pendra Road, Central Provinces, India.---  
The social and economic condition of Indian christian communities, and their relation to the non-Christian peoples.
- Charles L. Bromley, Ningpo, Chekiang, China.---Socializing a Christian Chinese community.
- George F. McKibben, Apartado 15, Saltillo, Mexico,---Providing suitable literature for Mexican converts.
- George D. Josif, Baptist Normal School, Rangoon, Burma.---How to interpret the Christian religion to the Buddhists of Burma. Religious education in Burma.
- Wilfred E. Gordon, Christian Mission, Jhansi, U.P. India.---A sociological and psychological study of the religion of the people.
- William C. Smith, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Cal.---A survey of race relations on the Pacific Coast.
- Naoshige Satake, 530 Shimo Totsuka, Tokyo, Japan, ---Studies in Comparative Religion.
- James L. Lewis, Mission Press, Rangoon, Burma,---Interpenetration of cultures, and the relation of the races of Malaysia to each other.
- James H. Potter, Chittoor, Madras Presidency, India.---Psychology of worship in India. Race psychology and its effect upon religion.
- Joseph E. Tanquist, Kohima, Assam, India.---The interpretation of Christianity to the preliterate tribes of Assam. The Christianizing of objectionable native customs.
- Daniel A. Hastings, Bailundo, Angola, West Africa,---The problems of race conflict in Angola, with special reference to the hybrid group.
- Newton H. Carman, American Baptist Mission, Swatow, China.---The problem of making Christianity indigenous and self-supporting in China.
- Seymour E. Moon, K. E. T. I., Kimpese, Congo Belge.---Educational measurements for Congo children.

Miss Enola Eno, Lucknow, India.---A Critical Evaluation of the Modernist Trends in Hinduism.

L. T. Hites, An Investigation of Southern Baptist Mission Work in Rio de Janeiro.

Still others have written expressing their interest in the purposes of the Extension and their desire to cooperate, but as yet they have formulated no definite problem for investigation.

Even a casual survey of the above will reveal some very interesting and significant features:

(a) The Research Extension, through its registered members, has already reached out into twelve or thirteen different countries, each with its own peculiarities of culture and mission work. There are, however, several exceedingly important regions of cultural fusion where as yet we have no correspondents, such as many of the countries of Latin America, the whole region of Egypt and the Near East, Eastern Africa, the Malay District and other Islands of the Eastern Pacific.

(b) The topics as given above range all the way from a definite and well defined thesis for investigation on the one hand to an expression of interest in the general field of religious interplay and cultural fusion on the other. Some of the men approach the matter from the angle of the psychologist, others from that of the sociologist, the religious educationalist, or the anthropologist. But whatever the angle of approach, whether the thesis be definite or general, all have this in common: they are interested in discovering more exactly both the meaning and the manner of the Christianization process of which they themselves are a component part.

The replies that have come in so far make it clear that three things are causing some perplexity and concern.

(1) The first is the question of time. This is a matter which each individual will have to solve for himself, according to his own scheme of activities and his interpretation of how he can make his greatest contribution to the causes of humanity. The supply of time, like that of money, is limited for every one, and both have to be budgeted according to the relative urgency of the various claims.

(2) One of the first impressions that every one gets as he contemplates the intricate interplay of objects and forces which we call cultural fusion is a feeling of bewilderment. It has the appearance of a tangled skein of yarn which has suddenly taken on life and motion, thus making the tangle more intricate than ever. In the presence of such complexity, one scarcely knows where to begin and where to end in any attempt to unravel the puzzle. Everything seems to be so intricately inter-related.

The missionary investigator who is finding it difficult on this account to delimit the field of his investigation may get some helpful suggestions from other workers in the general field of social and religious research. As a rule attention has been centered upon three main features of the general phenomenon of human interaction. (a) The experience of the individual living in the midst of his total environment; (b) The interplay of group upon group; (c) The changes taking place in cultural elements as these come into contact with each other. It will be recognized at once that these are but different approaches to the same great cultural process from three separate angles, or rather different centers of interest, according as the emphasis is laid now upon one main feature and now upon another. They are similar to three different mountain peaks from which the same landscape may be viewed, but each time from a different point of view. A word or two may be added with reference to each of these:-

(a) Considerable attention has already been given to the experience of the individual. This study has been carried on by the religious psychologist, the religious educationalist, and the social psychologist, and up to the present time with some few exceptions, most of the attention has been centered upon the religious experience of the West. The religious experience of the faithful in other religions, and also of the converts to Christianity of all lands must be studied, compared and contrasted with equal care and attention. Some of the typical works on this subject to date are:

- Wm. James, Varieties of Religious Experience.
- Joh. Warneck, The Living Christ and the Dying Heathen--The Experience of a Missionary in Animistic Heathendom. Revell.
- Katsuji Kato, The Psychology of Oriental Religious Experience.
- E. A. Annett, Conversion in India. Madras, 1920.
- M. T. Price, Christian Missions and Oriental Civilizations, Evans and Sons, Shanghai, China.
- A. C. Underwood, Conversion Christian and non-Christian. Mac-Millan, 1925.
- E. S. Ames, The Psychology of Religious Experience, Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Campbell N. Moody, The Mind of Early Converts, London, 1920.

In studying the religious experience of individuals, a useful working distinction may be made between those educational and developmental processes by means of which right religious attitudes and habits are built up, and those periods of religious crisis when the individual is brought to the point where he is willing to exchange loyalties, renounce old habits, and surrender himself to more alluring ideals, higher or lower as the case may be. One method of study is to center attention upon some individual, to trace the history of his religious development and experience. In this case the causes and explanations of present character and experience are sought in the life history of the individual. This kind of study brings to light that which is peculiar, unique and individual in religious experience. A more recent kind of study is to investigate some common religious experience, such as the conversion experience, as it takes place in a large number of people,

contrasting and comparing such experiences with the purpose of discovering what is common to them all and what is exceptional or individual. A few typical questions for investigation are given below:

Biographical studies.

The religious experiences of first generation Christians, compared with that of second generation or third generation Christians.

Problems touching the religious education of individuals in typical Oriental environments, and coming from typical Oriental life and society.

The conversion experience of converts in certain regions and from certain faiths or cultures.

In all such studies our chief interest lies in the religious changes which take place in the individual, in discovering to what these changes may be attributed, in understanding the place he makes for himself in his different group relationships, the values which he finds in each of these social groupings, the attitudes which are developed within him through these relationships, and the degree of satisfaction which he finds in life.

(b) Another set of investigation problems takes as its center of interest the religious experience of some particular group of people (more or less organized), or of some community of people (thrown together by geographical proximity rather than bound together by social organization). In this case the unit of attention is the group rather than the individuals within that group. These social groupings should be studied both with reference to their internal organization and activities, and also with reference to what might be called their external relationships, that is their interplay either with individuals or other groupings.

Bibliography:

Park and Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology  
Cooley, Charles H., Human Nature and the Social Order  
Social Process  
Social Organization

A considerable number of topics mentioned by our correspondents belong to this class of investigation. The following are samples of such topics of study: the family, the caste, the guild, the village, any religion considered as a body of religious people rather than as a system of doctrines, or of rites and ceremonies. About any or all of these the following questions may be asked and any of these questions represents a problem for investigation:-

What is the nature and also the strength of the controls which the family, the caste, the village, or the church exercises over its constituent members?

Concerning leadership, who are the leaders and how do they exercise their leadership; wherein does their power lie?

What are the protective devices which any group employs in order to shield itself from undesirable influences?

To what extent does the group or the community or the religion satisfy the great life needs and "wishes" of its members?

What signs of disintegration are discernible in the group solidarity of any of these?

What is the origin and significance of such disintegration?

What forms of group conflict or group rivalry are apparent? Christian propaganda places the Christian church in a rivalry with established institutions and any of these so-called conflicts is a fitting subject for investigation.

(c) Another legitimate approach to the confused mass of human interaction is to center attention upon what may be called cultural elements.

We refer here to a whole range of things, some objective and others abstract, which become fitting objects of study in view of the fact that they have meaning and value for human beings: doctrines, rites, ceremonies, superstitions, customs, and even the family, the clan or the caste in so far as they may be considered a significant factor or element in a civilization, rather than being viewed as a grouping of people.

Bibliography.

- Beran, Edwyn, Hellenism and Christianity, London, 1923.  
Harnack, A., The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries  
Thonliss, Robert H., (Univ. of Manchester) An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, 1923  
Coe, Geo. A., The Psychology of Religion, U. of C. Press, 1916 (Contains four chapters on the scientific study of religion)  
Boad, F., The Mind of Primitive Man  
Park, R. E., Old World Traits Transplanted (Americanization)  
Kroeber, A. L., Anthropology, 1923  
Wessler, Clark, Man and Culture, 1923

Here the general method has been to trace the historical development of each or any of these in their own social setting and in their relation to extraneous influences with the object of discovering how far each may be considered to be a spontaneous and independent development within the circle of its own cultural environment and how far it has been borrowed from others, or has been influenced by others. This has been the study of the historian of doctrine within the Christian church, and of the anthropologist in an effort to trace the cultural developments of primitive peoples and of the historian of religions. Such investigations have sought to discover what may have taken place in the more or less distant past. On the mission field today, however, this inter-cultural process, this developmental process, is actually going on all the time and should be studied in the process itself. Every mission field is in reality a laboratory in which social and religious reactions and interactions are constantly taking place, the understanding of which would throw

light upon many a baffling problem concerning the future of the world. The following are a few of the questions which come to mind in this connection:

In what respects does any local culture, Indian, Japanese, African, as the case may be, tend to modify the orthodox interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ?

Are the Christian sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper taking on any new forms and significance now that they have been transplanted into the midst of civilizations which are new and foreign?

What is happening to the native marriage customs, burial rites, feast days, etc., under the influence of ideas and ways that are Western?

Is the exotic institution of the Christian church undergoing any subtle changes in polity and constitution (rather than doctrine) through having been planted in new territory?

To what extent does missionary dominance tend to impede or to foment cultural transformations within the Christian Community? Does the exercise of self-determination on the part of the native churches result in a greater fusion of cultures within the church or is the contrary the result in your locality?

In all probability a number of our correspondents will find in such questions as the above, or in kindred problems, some special study in which they are most interested, for which are most prepared, and also for which their own locality and experience furnish the most promising fund of relevant data. The proper procedure in such case is to center attention upon a congenial subject and to pursue it continually.

(d) It is felt, however, that one of the things which the Research Extension must do, while encouraging and assisting in so far as possible such particular and uncorrelated investigations, must be to enlist the study of all our men upon some problem, common to all our mission fields, which may

be investigated, under a variety of conditions, in different countries and in different settings, and the results of these various studies finally correlated in an effort to form generalizations, and discover similarities and contrasts which may serve as reliable guides to future workers.

The general subject which we propose therefore is: - The influence of the prevailing forms of group life over the individual in any mission field, and the resultant susceptibility or lack of susceptibility of the individual (or sub-group, such as the family, etc.) to outside propaganda.

Every individual forms a part of different groupings, ranging all way from the family, on through the caste, clan, tribe, village, religious body, and even to the nation or the larger cultural group, as the case may be. Missionary propaganda, in so far as it is proselytism, is an effort to win the individual away from the influence of a certain number of these groups over into the fellowship of the Christian Church; in so far as it is a leavening process, it operates as a subtle influence changing the group life itself without necessarily alienating any large number of its members.

In respect to both of these aspects of missionary propaganda a number of typical and significant questions arise:

First, concerning satisfactions:

What are the real contributions which each grouping makes to the life of the individual (or the sub-group); and how far is he satisfied with these?

What sense of security does he find in his group? Economic security? Religious security? etc.

To what extent does the group life afford the individual a satisfactory social standing, and a real participation in what is going on?

Does it provide him with a sufficient amount of intimate fellowship, companionship, and affection? Etc.

Second, forms and extent of group control:

What are the numerous and varied ways in which the family, the clan, the tribe, the guild, the priesthood, etc., dominate the individual (or the sub-group) and make it difficult for him to become a Christian or to be influenced by the Christian propaganda?

This involves investigations into the significance of taboos, threatened punishments (temporal or spiritual), public opinion and social ostracism, leaders and guardians of group life.

Third, group disintegration:

What factors and forces operate in your region tending to break down and to disintegrate these old established groups and group controls?

Such things as railroads, and other improved means of communication, new occupations, schools, increased knowledge and acquaintance with the rest of the world, etc., should be studied in this connection.

What kinds of unsettling does this disintegration bring about, both in the individual and in the solidarity of the group life?

Note its effect upon personal habits, group customs, respect for authority, new desires and old means of satisfaction, etc.

Fourth, the correlation between disintegration and successful propaganda.

What is the effect of this disintegration in the old groupings upon the success or failure of missionary propaganda, (considered either as a proselytising or a leavening process) in your neighborhood?

It is said that the "highly organized group" (sometimes called "the complex-culture group") exercises a more dominant influence over its members than do the simple - culture groups, such as primitive tribes, out-caste communities, etc. Investigate the truth or falsity of this in your

neighborhood. (M. T. Price defines a "complex-culture group" as one having the following characteristics:- (1) a history, traditional and usually written, covering generations or centuries; (2) special rites, doctrines, customs, and taboos; growing out of this history and now consciously ascribed to it; (3) a sacred book or books; (4) a sense of group prestige that has survived conflict with other cultures; (5) usually an organization of leadership, outside of the immediate family, for preserving and passing on the cultus and tradition. Christian Missions and Oriental Civilizations, p. 41).

Or more particularly, to what extent is the exceptional tenacity of Mohamedans, high caste people, devout Buddhists, etc., in the face of Christian propaganda, due to group solidarity?

Fifth, practical questions.

If this tenacity or solidarity proves to be a determining factor, wherein should mission work for the closely knit, highly cultured groups differ in method from that carried on among the simple culture peoples?

What are the methods of propaganda of Buddhism, Islam, or any other religion in so far as it has become aggressive in your neighborhood, and what light does it throw upon the above investigation?

Sixth, the converse proposition.

The above questions refer especially to the relations existing between the degree of solidarity of the non-Christian group and the success or failure of the Christian propaganda in its midst. There exists also the converse inquiry, namely, What is the relationship between the degree of "solidarity" in the Christian church or community and the amount of "backsliding" or the degree of "steadfastness" in the converts to Christianity?

This is the converse side of the same general subject, and to the missionary is equally important. All the questions suggested above are relevant here and should be followed up and investigated.

As a subject then of common investigation for all who can possibly undertake it we suggest this question concerning group solidarity, group disintegration, and its bearing upon the whole process of Christianization.

(3) The third question with reference to which some of our correspondents feel considerable uncertainty relates to the methods which should be followed if the investigations are to merit confidence. For the benefit of any who may feel the need of suggestions along this line, we list below in barest outline some of the steps which it is well to follow:

(a) The selection of a topic for investigation, and the delimitation of the field to be surveyed.

(b) Cultivation of the appropriate attitude of mind. This involves at least, an inquiring mind, that is always asking questions; a receptive mind, that is open to all data, both that which is welcome and that which is unwelcome; an appreciative mind, sensitive and responsive to the feelings and interpretations of others and to the real significance of the data in the question under investigation. Nowhere is this more indispensable than in the study of social and religious movements.

(c) Diligent gathering of the fullest fund of data to be found within the field of investigation. This will generally involve:-

First, reading widely, in order to profit by the experience of others.

Second, extensive "field work," that is actual investigation of human activity in relevant life-situations.

Third, in some cases, experimentation. Where a certain amount of isolation can be secured and the situation submitted to specially designed influences, it is possible to turn churches, schools, families, villages and individuals even, into laboratories for research purposes.

(d) All such phenomena should be keenly observed and gathered together, noting many an apparently insignificant detail. This eye for the significant factors in any social situation is to be acquired only through experience and prolonged familiarity with the field in question.

(e) Written records of all data should be kept in some handy form. Put all records on a uniform sheet of paper, not larger than ordinary letter paper and not smaller than 6 inches by 4 inches. This will greatly simplify the mechanical operation of filing the same and consulting it later on. Only one item of information should be entered on any one sheet of paper.

(f) An effort must be made to evaluate the data, with respect to:-

First, reliability, depending upon trustworthiness of the source, and accuracy of observation or experimentation.

Second, true significance, depending upon the relationship of the event with its own past and present.

(g) This fund of material is then studied over repeatedly until one is perfectly familiar with it, and then is allowed to fall into its most natural classifications under topics and categories which the data itself suggests through similarities or dissimilarities in behavior. Special attention should be paid to any residue of material which refuses to fall readily under these categories. It is out of this residue that many an important discovery is made.

(h) By this time certain tentative conclusions will begin to take shape: or it may become clear that the facts in hand do not warrant any conclusions. If genuine correlations are discovered between two or more factors in these categories (expansion and heat, the increase in automobiles and in death rates; disintegration of old group life and susceptibility to propaganda, etc.) then the conclusion is warranted that a causal relation probably exists between the two.

(i) All conclusions formed must then be submitted to scrutiny and strict verification, by trying them out in varying kinds of circumstances, asking embarrassing questions concerning them, and checking them up in the light of fuller information. If they stand this testing on the part of the investigator himself, they may then be announced to the world, where again they should be and will be subjected to further scrutiny and revision. In so far as they successfully stand this verification they become worthy of confidence and may be accepted as a guide to conduct.

For those who wish to pursue the subject of methodology still further we would recommend:

Lindeman, E. C., Social Discovery, Republic Publishing Co., New York  
Price, M. T., Christian Missions and Oriental Civilizations. (This is an effort to apply the scientific method to the study of the Christianization process.)

Vincent, J. M., Historical Research

Teggert, F. J., Prolegomena to History

Ogden and Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Richards, Mary, Social Diagnosis, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1917

The Research Extension Council stands ready to help in any way possible those who are engaged in the scientific investigation of social and religious phenomena on the foreign field. We welcome suggestions and recommendations which will make research work more reliable and profitable, and invite our correspondents to keep us informed as to the progress of their investigations.

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